

Oregon Legislature

Ways & Means Committee

RE: Support of Capitol Fund Request for Jefferson County - COCC Early Childhood Education and Health Careers Center

Dear Co-Chair Steiner, Co-Chair Sanchez and honorable committee members:

My name is Alexa Gassner and I have served on the board of directors for The Children's Learning Center in Madras for approximately fifteen years and have lived in Jefferson County for over twenty years. We are requesting support from this committee for \$5 Million for a capitol construction project for Jefferson County and Central Oregon Community College.

In the past twenty years, I have seen how increasingly difficult it is for working parents to find quality childcare for their infants and children. My husband and I both work in Madras and were fortunate to have our children attend The Children's Learning Center for childcare ten years ago. As a board member, every month I see the waiting list for families that want and need childcare and I sympathize with the impact on their earning potential and career growth as they wait, sometimes years, for a slot to open.

This project will greatly benefit Jefferson County as a means to attract working professionals to our community. It is extremely difficult to attract a quality workforce when there are not viable childcare options available for all working families. Central Oregon Community College has been an ideal partner in this project and its board recognizes the opportunities this project will bring to our depressed, yet diverse community. The chance for our community partners to offer quality childcare slots as well as health career education is one that we cannot pass up, nor do we take for granted.

As a board member, working professional and community contributor, I am very excited for this opportunity and I ask for and encourage your support for this capital funding request.

Alexa Gassner